

Message Text

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12

ORIGIN EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 H-02 DEAE-00 JUSE-00 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 /022 R

DRAFTED BY EA/TB - RMGIBSON:MFG

APPROVED BY EA/TB - GBROBERTS

S/NM - JRAFFERTY (SUBS)

EA/RA - WGALLAGHER (DRAFT)

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R 042255Z AUG 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

UNCLAS STATE 184042

E.O. 11652:

TAGS: SNAR, BM, TH

SUBJECT: OPIUM CARAVAN

1. THE DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED AN INQUIRY FROM CONGRESSMAN WOLFF AS TO THE ACCURACY OF AN AP WIRE STORY OF JULY 21 DATED BANGKOK DESCRIBING AN OPIUM CARAVAN FROM BURMA INTO THAILAND. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR COMMENT ABOUT THE STORY WHICH WE ARE QUOTING BELOW.

2. BEGIN QUOTE: A CARAVAN OF 100 WELL-ARMED CHINESE AND BURMESE BROUGHT AT LEAST THREE TONS OF OPIUM FROM BURMA INTO THAILAND OVER THE WEEKEND, AND FOUR THAI POLICEMEN WERE KILLED TRYING TO STOP THEM, THAI NARCOTICS AUTHORITIES SAID TODAY.

THE OPIUM WAS BELIEVED HEADED FOR SALE ON FOREIGN MARKET, COL. CHAVALIT YODMANEE, CHIEF OF THE POLICE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION DIVISION, SAID.

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A SEVEN-MAN PATROL TRIED TO STOP THE CARAVAN NEAR THE THAI-

BURMESE BORDER IN THE NORTHERN THAI PROVINCE OF CHIANG MAI BUT WAS FORCED TO RETREAT AFTER FOUR OF ITS MEMBERS WERE KILLED, HE SAID.

CHAVALIT SAID IT WAS THE FIRST OPIUM CARAVAN ENCOUNTERED SINCE THE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER OF SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA IN APRIL.

"WE EXPECT MORE OPIUM CARAVANS MOVING THROUGH NORTHERN THAILAND SINCE IT WILL BE VERY HARD FOR THEM TO COME THROUGH LAOS AND OTHER ROUTES IN INDOCHINA," CHAVALIT SAID. END QUOTE. INGERSOLL

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, OPIUM, DRUG ABUSE, POLICE FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE184042
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RMGIBSON:MFG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750269-0569
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750883/aaaacvxf.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hartledg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 FEB 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 FEB 2003 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <05 FEB 2004 by hartledg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPIUM CARAVAN
TAGS: SNAR, BM, TH
To: BANGKOK RANGOON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006